potential. While India has granted Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to Pakistan is yet to accord similar status to India in contravention of its GATT/ WTO obligations. Expansion of trade with Pakistan will depend mainly on Pakistan granting MFN status to India.

Import of coal

764. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) quantity of coking and non-coking coal imported during the last two years;

(b) whether these imports have increased over the last few years;

(c) if so, the reasons thereof; and

(d) the action Government is contemplating to check the dependence on imported coking and non-coking coal in future while the country has vast coal reserves available?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) to (c) According to the statistics available in the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, the total quantity of various types of coal imported into the country during the year 1994-95 and 1995-96 were as follows:

(Figures in lakh tonnes)
(Data provisional)

Year	Coking Coal	Non-Coking Coal	Other Coal including coks, etc.	Total
1994-95	101.58	5.74	6.60	113.92
1995-96	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	132.26*

* Grade-wise break-up of imports for 1995-96 is not available.

The domestic coking coal production has not been able to keep up with the increase in demand from the steel sector.

(d) Import of coking coal required for metallurgical purposes cannot be totally eliminated, since these are also required for blending with indigenous coal on quality considerations. The country also has limited reserves of coking coal as well as the superior grades of non-coking coals. However, steps are being taken to augment indigenous production of coking coal as well as non-coking coals to the extent practicable. These include the following:—

(i) Opening up of new mines and increasing efficiency and productivity in existing mines by modernisation, application of new technologies and ensuring timely availability of inputs and infrastructual facilities.

(ii) Partial de-regulation of coal prices is likely to improve internal resource generation of coal companies which will enable new projects to be taken up. It will also improve the financial viability of new mining projects.

(iii) The capital base of Coal India Limited has been restructured to enable it to raise additional financial resources from the capital markets which are required to add new coal production capacity.

(iv) Steps are being taken in co-ordination with the Railways to remove the transportation bottlenecks in such coalfield areas which have potential for enhanced production.

(v) Steps are being taken to remove the bottlenecks in land acquisition.

(vi) Private sector companies engaged in production of iron and steel, cement and generation, of power have been permitted to take up coal mining. This is expected to increase domestic coal production.